

PAIRS Affiliate Spotlight

PINK House: Product of Charleston Visionary

In the late 1990s, Reverend Christian King worked with young people in her home church, located in her North Charleston community. Having young children herself, she loved to work with children in Bible study sessions. Her teachings were made difficult by the fact that many of the young people she was teaching could not read.

"I could not teach Biblical principals to kids who could not read," said King. Early on, she realized she was faced with a challenging set of circumstances. She refers to this as her "baptism" and since that time, has worked to helped children learn to read.

Reverend King is the Executive Director of the PINK House, an afterschool program located in North Charleston. The PINK House is an outreach arm of Lowcountry Christian Center, Seventh Day Baptist, where Reverend King is Associate Pastor. The program, which opened in January 1999, serves between 55 and 60 children during the school year. In addition, they operate a full-day program during the summer months.

"The number of children served depends on our volunteer base. We look for a low student-teacher ratio to help guide these children and build on their literacy needs," said Reverend King.

Finding adult volunteers and transportation are the two biggest challenges facing the program, according to King. There are a number of retired individuals in the community served by the program but King states it has been hard to engage a population she initially thought would welcome the opportunity to volunteer. Looking for unique ways to involve people who live in the surrounding community is a priority for the PINK House in the coming months.

The original volunteer base for the PINK House was a team of Americorps volunteers provided to the center from a grant. Americorps' initial work within the PINK House was the first time Americorps had been in a community start-up program. Presently, the PINK House relies on work-study volunteers from local institutions of higher learning, as well as individuals who wish to help. Many of the tutors are organized into teams, known as "Team Tutors." The center works around the schedules of individual volunteers but consistency is stressed so that relationships can be formed and forged. The program is applying for



Reverend Christian King, Executive Director of the PINK House (back row, second from left), is surrounded by some of her students.

Created in 1993, AmeriCorps is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service. AmeriCorps members serve through more than 2,100 nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations nationwide. They tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, run after-school programs, and help communities respond to disasters. To learn more about AmeriCorps and their funding opportunities, go to www.americorps.org or call 1-800-942-2677.

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another Americorp team to begin identifying home-based day care centers in the area, to work with them on introducing literacy to young children.

The reading program at the PINK House is centered on the belief that developing good listening and speaking skills are critical in the development of good reading skills. "You must have a good solid background in these areas," stated King. The program uses a reading tool called Reading Soul Mates, which focuses on older children reading to younger children. A pair reads a book and then gives a presentation about the book to the larger group. The teaching tool King uses is a product called ReadingKey, produced by Tampa Reads. The components of the program are phonics based.

Team tutors who work within PINK House are working on a number of projects for children within the community. They are involved with working with 4-year-olds, reading nursery rhymes and short stories. In addition, they are surveying parents, local churches, and employers, assessing the literacy needs of the community. Long-term plans include developing home literacy kits and promoting technology.

The vision Rev. King had for the PINK House almost never took shape because of resistance from the community the program serves. During the zoning process, the facility was zoned as a daycare because there was not another category it fit into. "Some in the community thought we had an ulterior motive. They believed we were a money-making entity and it took persistence and determination to make this a reality," said Reverend King.

Reverend King also initially ran into opposition from local churches. When she initially decided to put her plan into motion, she went to some of the area churches in search of a facility. For many in the community, the church is the second home. She couldn't make it work because of details. "I thought surely these churches will jump on board since this is about helping children. I will provide the resources; all I need is a facility," said King. At that point, she purchased the house, now known as the PINK House, with personal funds.

King chose the community because she had a good relationship with James Chapel AME, which sits across the street from the house. She also chose the community because of its high need. "A snapshot of this community is a single female with 2+ kids, 2 or more jobs, no benefits, and a salary under \$12,000," King said.

King's persistence and determination are seen on the faces of the children her program serves. She stresses that children not be forced to come to the PINK House. They make the decision to come but they agree to abide by the rules of the program, put in the form of a contract. When the child signs the contract, they shake on it.

Do you have a similar story about setting up your program? What are the hurdles you had and how did you overcome them? Please let us know so we can share your story with others. Contact Dana Yow at danay@eoc.state.sc.us, or 803-734-6164.



PAIRS Affiliate Recognized by President Bush

Tracey Ely, Director of Tutor Eau Claire!, a PAIRS Affiliate, was recognized for her volunteer and tutoring efforts by President George W. Bush, on his recent visit to Columbia. President Bush was in Columbia Monday, April 18, 2005, addressing the S.C. General Assembly.

Ely told WIS Channel 10, the NBC affiliate in Columbia, that the President thanked her for her volunteer work and recognized all of the volunteers in South Carolina.

The PINK House Guidelines

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Attending the PINK HOUSE is a privilege. You do not have to be here. We want to have students at the PINK House who care about their work and who want to improve. Kids who do respect their peers, their tutors, Reverend King, and anyone else at the PINK HOUSE do not have a right to be here.

We hope that you will care about and be respectful to your tutors, and work hard every day. If you do, the only reason your tutor will ever go to Reverend King is to tell her how well you are doing! But if your tutor has to tell Reverend King that you are not being respectful or working hard, you will have to have a meeting with Reverend King and your parents will be contacted as well. You might have a suspension from the PINK HOUSE, and you might not be allowed to come back at all.

The PINK HOUSE is our place to learn and grow and we need to take care of it and each other.

Remember:

NO: Running, Fighting, Stealing, Lying, Gum!

YES: Share, Manners, Respect, Work Hard, Have Fun!

Please sign and date the part below and keep the guidelines for yourself! Thank you from the PINK HOUSE!

I have read and understand the above Guidelines.

Your name: _____

Date: _____

PAIRS Affiliates *(updated 4/19/05)*

Barnwell County First Steps
Partnership
Blackville, SC

Bethlehem Community
Center
Columbia, SC

Ms. Dorothy Bostic
Pamplico, SC

Ms. Mary Ann Collins
Pamplico, SC

Communities in Schools of
Dillon County
Latta, SC

Del Webb's Sun City
Reading Program
Bluffton, SC

Diva International
Columbia, SC

Dunbar Child Development
and Family Learning Center
Greer, SC

Ms. Lenore Eaddy
Johnsonville, SC

Ms. Pat Erb
Florence, SC

Eva P. Trezevant Memorial
Resource Center, Inc.
Columbia, SC

Greater Columbia Literacy
Council
Columbia, SC

Mr. Langston Guiles
Pamplico, SC

HopeInChrist Ministries, Inc.
Columbia, SC

Lapsits for Early Literacy
Greenville, SC

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Columbia, SC

Mr. Eddie Lesaine
Pamplico, SC

Miss Ruby's Kids
Pawley's Island, SC

Ms. Nancy Hayes
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Hollywood, SC

New Light Missionary
Baptist Church
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P.I.N.K. House
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Reach out and Read-South
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Mr. Rufus Snead
Florence, SC

Ms. Madeline Thompson
Florence, SC

Ms. Dollee Turner
Pamplico, SC

Tutor Eau Claire!
Columbia, SC

21st CCLC Batesburg-
Leesville Middle Afterschool
Program
Batesburg, SC

Ms. Alma Winston
Pamplico, SC

PAIRS Dates to Remember

April / May 2005	<i>Affiliate Resource Guide Published</i>
May 27, 2005	PAIRS Advisory Board Meeting (Daily Newspapers)
October 2005	PAIRS Affiliate Summit Location, Date TBA

If your program needs a copy of the PAIRS logo for use in printed materials and on the web, please contact Shellie Allen at (803) 734-5036 or via e-mail at sallen@eoc.state.sc.us.

PAIRS
PARENTS & ADULTS INSPIRING READING SUCCESS

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